

Message Text

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ACTION PM-07

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01

SS-20 AID-20 IGA-02 L-03 NSC-10 PRS-01 PA-04 USIA-15

DRC-01 /106 W

----- 067971

P R 211050Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4255

SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

JCS WASHDC PRIORITY

CINCPAC PRIORITY

COMUSSAG PRIORITY

INFO USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:

SUBJ: TRAFFIC IN BRASS

SECSTATE PASS AID

1. ELIZABETH BECKER, STRINGER FOR WASHINGTON POST, NEWSWEEK AND NBC, INFORMED PAO DECEMBER 21 SHE INTENDS FILE STORY ON KHMER TRAFFIC IN BRASS CARTRIDGE CASINGS. SHE REQUESTED INTERVIEW WITH CHMEDTC TO OBTAIN (A) BACKGROUND ON OVERALL BRASS SITUATION, (B) U.S.G. STATUTORY RESTRICTIONS ON TRAFFIC IN MAP SUPPLIED BRASS, (C) MISSION OPINION ON CURRENT SITUATION.

2. BELIEVING THAT FEWER FACTUAL ERRORS WOULD BE LIKELY TO OCCUR IN STORY IF INTERVIEW GIVEN, CHARGE CONCURRED AND CHMEDTC AGREED. BECKER WAS INFORMED THAT NO PORTION OF INTERVIEW WAS FOR ATTRIBUTION.

3. PRINCIPAL POINTS EMPHASIZED BY CHMEDTC DURING INTERVIEW FOLLOW:

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(A) ALTHOUGH TRAFFIC IN BRASS HAS NOT REACHED SIZEABLE PROPORTIONS AND IS LIKELY TO BE LESS THAN 1,000 TONS, EMBASSY AND MEDTC ACTED SEVERAL MONTHS AGO TO INVESTIGATE SITUATION AND PROMPT GKR TO RESTRICT ILLEGAL TRAFFIC. IT WAS HOPED THAT SUCH ACTION WOULD PREVENT LARGE-SCALE BRASS TRAFFIC BEFORE IT COULD BEGIN.

(B) GKR RESPONDED TO REQUEST WITH FANK G-2 INVESTIGATION WHICH HAS RESULTED IN SEVERAL ARRESTS, AS WELL AS IN MILITARY AND CIVILIAN OFFICIALS BEING RELIEVED OF POSTS. ILLEGAL BRASS DESTINED FOR EXPORT HAS BEEN CONFISCATED, AND ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR EXPORT ATTEMPTS HAS BEEN DISMANTLED.

(C) ALTHOUGH MISSION DOES NOT MAINTAIN THAT ALL ITS OBJECTIVES IN BRASS SITUATION HAVE BEEN REALIZED, WE DO BELIVED SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, AND WE ARE GENERALLY SATISFIED WITH KHMER RESPONSE, WHICH WAS MORE RAPID THAN USUAL.

4. BECKER MADE FOLLOWING POINTS DURING COURSE OF INTERVIEW:

(A) SOME SOURCES STATE TRAFFIC HAS NOT BEEN STOPPED AND SEVERAL SHIPMENTS WILL BE MADE SOON.

(B) ONE SOURCE STATES VOLUME IS IN "HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF TONS", BUT BECKER HAS NOT FOUND EVIDENCE OF THIS AMOUNT.

(C) MANY KHMER WITH WHOM SHE SPOKE CLAIM THEY DID NOT KNOW TRAFFIC WAS ILLEGAL.

(D) SOME SOURCES STATE THAT ORGANIZATION RESPONSIBLE FOR TRAFFIC HAS NOT BEEN DISMANTLED.

5. BASED ON BECKER'S KNOWLEDGE, WE ARE SURE SHE HAS HAD ACCESS TO G-2 INVESTIGATION RESULTS, THAT SHE HAS HAD ACCESS TO CUSTOMS DOCUMENTS AND THAT SHE HAS SPOKEN WITH COMMERCIAL ENTTEPRENEURS WHO HAVE DEALT IN BRASS.

6. WISH TO ALERT ADDRESSEES TO LIKELIHOOD THAT STORY ON BRASS WILL APPEAR IN ONE OR MORE OF MEDIA BECKER REPRESENTS (WASHINGTON POST, NEWSWEEK, NBC). IT IS TO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BE HOPED THAT BACKGROUND DISCUSSION WITH CHMEDTC MAY HAVE REDUCED THE POSSIBILITIES OF FACTUAL INACCURACIES AND HOSTILE REPERCUSSIONS.

7. CHARGE AND CHMEDTC WILL SEE MARSHAL LON NOL THIS EVENING TO WARN HIM OF THE IMPENDING BECKER STORY AND ENDEAVOR TO HAVE HIM MAKE A STATMENT ALONG FOLLOWING LINES BEFORE STORY HITS WIRE:

(A) GKR INVESTIGATION UNDERWAY FOR SEVERAL MONTHS
ON BRASS TRAFFIC?

(B) RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION ARE

(C) THE GOVERNMENT AND FANK HAVE TAKEN THE FOLLOWING STEPS

(D) WE WILL CONTINUE TO WATCH THIS IMPORTANT MATTER
AND ENSURE STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW
ENDERS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: elyme
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PHNOM14227
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PHNOM PENH
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731210/aaaaahhd.tel
Line Count: 126
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION PM
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: elyme
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 NOV 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Nov-2001 by shawdg>; APPROVED <08-Jan-2002 by elyme>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TRAFFIC IN BRASS SECSTATE PASS AID
TAGS: ESTC, CB
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005